

The

INTERCHANGE

Monthly Newsletter for State Employees Prepared by State Employees



52 State Employees Receive Special Recognition at First Semi-Annual Governor's Public Service Awards Ceremony

The Governor's Public Service Awards were recently established to recognize state employees who have proven themselves as model public servants through their outstanding contributions. Through this program, twice a year Agency Heads can nominate up to three individuals or teams within their agency who really made a difference in state government from stretching tax dollars more efficiently to significantly increasing the level of service provided to citizens..

The State Personnel Department received many nominations for both individuals and teams, and all were reviewed by State Personnel Director, a Division Director from the State Personnel Department, a

representative from Governor's office and representative of Office of Management and Budget.

February 22, 2006 marked the first semi-annual Governor's Public Service Awards Ceremony, where 52 state employees were honored for their contributions to the State. The ceremony was held in the State House Rotunda, where Governor Daniels personally thanked each honoree for their hard work and dedication to improving Indiana State Government. All 52 honorees were awarded a special medallion, a check for \$1000, and a photo with Governor Daniels.

Employees from the following agencies were recognized at the event: Bureau of Motor

Vehicles, Dept. of Child Services, Dept. of Correction, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Labor, Dept. of Natural Resources, Office of Energy and Defense Development, Family and Social Services, Dept. of Homeland Security, Dept. of Administration, Dept. of Environmental Management, Indiana Finance Authority, Dept. of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Technology, Public Employees Retirement Fund, Professional Licensing Agency, Commission on Public Records, Dept. of Revenue, and State Personnel Dept.

The list of recipients and a brief description of their accomplishments may be found at the State Personnel Department's intranet site: <http://intranet.spd.state.in.us/>.

Governor Proclaims March Disability Awareness Month

Governor Mitchell E. Daniels has proclaimed March Disability Awareness Month. Each March, more than 1,200 groups and individuals in Indiana help promote the statewide awareness campaign to hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers through a variety of activities. The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities coordinates Disability Awareness Month to promote inclusion, independence and employment for people with disabilities.

The Disability Awareness Month 2006 theme is "Band together." This year's poster features a group of four children and a child's assistance dog marching as a band in an impromptu neighborhood parade. The poster illustrates the theme by showing that a band is a group effort supported by the contributions of several individuals. Each person makes an important contribution to the band's sound and to the fun atmosphere of the parade, and even the assistance dog adds to the celebration.

The Council facilitates Disability Awareness Month by providing free materials to help Hoosiers plan activities in local communities.



The materials include 30 information and activity planning packets, with topics ranging from planning disability-focused art contests to increasing ADA awareness in a business. The Council offers theme-specific materials, including posters, bookmarks and stickers.

"Our goal in this campaign is to encourage the community to embrace the richness of diversity," said Council Executive Director Suellen Jackson-Boner. "People with disabilities have a great deal to contribute in making the community a better place."

As in previous years, Disability Awareness Month 2006 will be celebrated with community-based activities carried out by thousands of people across the State of Indiana.

"Disability Awareness Month provides a wonderful opportunity for communities to organize awareness fairs, ADA training, essay contests, and displays in schools, government agencies and businesses," Jackson-Boner said.

For more information about the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities or Disability Awareness Month, visit www.in.gov/gcpd.

BE THE SOLUTION!

Volunteer to Build a Habitat for Humanity Home

Think you work for the best agency in Indiana state government? Here's your chance to prove it! You can "be the solution" for a family seeking affordable housing in Indianapolis! State employees are needed to assist in building a Habitat for Humanity home as a part of the 2006 Governor's Conference on Service and Volunteerism chaired by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

The build will take place from April 6-May 12, 2006 with volunteers completing such tasks as framing, landscaping, painting, and preparing insulation. Much of the work happens over weekends with volunteers having their choice of days and shifts. Persons who aid in the build are also invited to the dedication ceremony, in which the family receives the keys to their new home, on May 13, 2006. In addition to volunteer support, employees may also make financial contributions.

Besides the satisfaction of helping a family acquire a new home, the agency with the most participation will receive a commemorative plaque recognizing their accomplishments. This is the first Habitat for Humanity home in the country built primarily by state employees. Please contact Johanna Amefia-Koffi at 234-4234 (jkoffi@ofbci.in.gov) for additional information, to sign up as a volunteer, or to make a contribution.

In its 3rd year, the Governor's Conference on Service and Volunteerism is designed for all who give their time and talent in service to others. The conference theme is "Be the Solution"—the purpose of the conference is to celebrate, rejuvenate and inspire all those who serve, offering participants a renewed sense of empowerment and purpose in contributing to the solutions that make Indiana a great place to live.

I-File: Fast, Friendly, Free.

State employees are encouraged to use the new I-File program online to file their state taxes this year. The new program is fast, friendly and free to all taxpayers – and offers a range of features that make tax filing simple and easy. In addition, the state saves 96 cents on every return filed electronically.

Any taxpayer that filed individual income taxes last year with the state of Indiana is eligible to use the I-File program.

Simple and easy

The new interactive program walks users through every step of the tax-filing process with a question-and-answer format. The program even selects what form the taxpayer needs to use based on income and other eligibility criteria. Web links referencing current tax booklets are also

available to answer any questions that may arise during the filing process.

"It truly is hard to get lost using this Q-and-A format, even for someone who may not be familiar with the process," said Karen Barthelmes, quality assurance manager, with the Department of Revenue.

Taxpayers with the same address and/or employer can save time by carrying over the information from the previous year, using the "pre-fill" function. The new



2006 Smoking Cessation Programs

CLASS DATES:

March 16, IGCS-Conf Rm 6
March 23, IGCS-Conf Rm 6
March 30, IGCS-Conf Rm 6
April 6, IGCS-Conf Rm 6
April 13, IGCS-Conf Rm 6

CLASS TIMES:

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

CLASS LOCATIONS:

IN Government Center South (IGCS)
402 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Call Barb Knott to register
317-233-3282

Class size is limited so early
registration is important

"resume" feature allows users to save and finish at another time. Department officials estimate the most novice taxpayer can complete the filing process in about 30 minutes.

"I-File also expedites the refund process," said Barthelmes. "On average, taxpayers who file electronically receive their state refunds within 14 days of filing."

Goodbye TeleFile, hello I-File

TeleFile, an IRS program, is no longer available. Last year, more than 57,000 taxpayers used the TeleFile program. Revenue officials are encouraging all former TeleFile users to switch to I-File.

Taxpayers can access the I-File program at: www.ifile.in.gov

Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. -- A Benefit for All Ages!

Whether your career is just starting out or retirement lies in the not-too-distant future, All State of Indiana employees should take advantage of the **deferred compensation program**.

Participating in **Hoosier S.T.A.R.T.** may help provide a more comfortable and secure financial future. Not only can you save and invest on a tax-deferred basis,

but the Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. Program offers quality investment options, low fees, local service representatives, financial education services and planning tools that can help you better prepare for retirement. In addition, state employees are eligible for a **matching contribution of \$15 per pay if they contribute at least \$15 per pay (a total matching benefit of \$390 annually)**.

When you're ready to enroll, simply do one of the following:

1. Call **(877) SAV – N – RET (877-728-6738), Option 2**
2. Come by our Indianapolis office at 101 W Ohio Street, Suite 760

Your Financial Future STARTs Today!

www.hoosierstart.com

Take Advantage of PERF Online Member Services

More than 2,000 PERF members have already registered to use the new internet service that makes it much easier to manage your personal information on file with the agency. *PERF Interactive* gives you the ability to change addresses, beneficiaries, beneficiaries' addresses or the investment allocation of your Annuity Savings Account funds.

PERF Interactive saves time and energy. Using a secure internet site and personal identification number (PIN) issued by PERF, you enter your new personal account information and PERF's records will be updated immediately. (Note: Investment changes must be made before the last month of a quarter in order to take effect in the next quarter. For example, a change made in February will take effect April 1. A change made in March will take effect July 1.)

To use this new service, visit to www.perf.IN.gov and click on the *PERF Interactive* logo. You will be asked to establish a user name and password, and request a PIN. As a security measure, your PIN will be mailed to the address on file at PERF. (If that address is not current, you must submit an address change in writing to PERF before receiving a PIN. An address change form can be found at www.perf.in.gov.)

After you receive your PIN, return to the *PERF Interactive* page and log in. From there, you will be able to manage your information. This service can be used on any computer with internet access. If you do not have internet access at home, Indiana public libraries offer this service.

Questions: Email questions@perf.IN.gov or call 317-233-4162 or 888-525-1687.

CLARIFICATION: Conversion of Excess Leave

Conversion of unused accrued leave into a contribution to a deferred contribution account is currently a pilot program which applies **ONLY** to employees in the judicial and legislative branches of state government at this time. The pilot program **does not apply to employees in the executive branch**.

The pilot program was authorized during the 2005 legislative session.

Nutritional Seminar Series Offered to help State Employees Get INShape in 2006

IDEM's Wellness Council is offering Nutritional Seminars to all state employees. Information regarding the seminars will be printed monthly in the Interchange. There is no cost to attend, so feel free to attend.

The next seminar session will contain information about Metabolic syndrome, which affects 47 million adults in the United States. It is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, peripheral vascular

disease, stroke and diabetes and has been linked to numerous other health concerns. Topics will cover risk factors of metabolic syndrome, as well as what can be done to reduce its effects. There will be time for questions immediately after the discussion.

Next information session:

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2006

Place: IGCS Auditorium

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

The seminar will be held by Dr. Jonathan Marsh, Internal Medicine Physician with Meridian Adult Medicine, a Primary Care practice of The Care Group, LLC.

Another seminar will be held later this month, however details were not available at the time the Interchange went to print. For more information, please contact Alexandra Yeung at ayeung@idem.in.gov or Kim Wade at kwade@idem.in.gov.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

April 2006

Date	Time	Class	Cost
4	9:00 - 3:00	CERT/Managing People**	\$25/program*
5	9:00 - 3:00	CERT/Selection & Interviewing**	\$25/program*
6	9:00 - 12:00	Record Keeping Guidelines for Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (OSHA)	Free
13	9:00 - 3:30	Performance Management (separate from the CERT program)	Free
18	9:00 - 4:00	CERT/Personnel Rules**	\$25/program*
19	9:00 - 12:00	CERT/Progressive Discipline**	\$25/program*
20	8:30 - 1:00	Driver Improvement Plan	Free***
20	10:00 - 11:30	PERF: Your Retirement Program	Free
20	1:00 - 3:30	Hoosier S.T.A.R.T. 1:00-2:00 "Plan Overview" 2:30-3:30 "Enrollment"	Free
25	9:00 - 3:30	CERT/Performance Management**	\$25/program*
26	9:00 - 1:00	CERT/Family Medical Leave**	\$25/program*
05/03	9:00 - 4:00	CERT/Workplace Harassment**	\$25/program*
05/04	9:00 - 12:00	CERT/Administrative Investigations**	\$25/program*

*The Comprehensive Employee Relations Training (CERT) program has a fee of \$25.00 for each participant. The \$25.00 fee covers the eight (8) training sessions inclusive in the CERT program. CERT participants must commit to attend all eight (8) training sessions in the program month. **These classes are only offered to SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS AND/OR HUMAN RESOURCES PERSONNEL. ***Driver Improvement Program free for State of Indiana employees only.
NOTE: All classes will be held in the State Conference Center except where noted. Classes that require a fee are noted. Obtain your supervisor's approval to attend. For more information or to register, you will need to contact your agency training contact person (ATCP). For more information, visit the State Personnel Department's Training website:
<http://www.in.gov/jobs/training&development/0homepag.htm>

Happy St. Patrick's Day



Artwork provided by Jerry Williams, State Personnel Department.

Did You Know...

- St. Patrick's Day is on Mar.17, the day St. Patrick died.
- The first St. Patrick's Day parade did not take place in Ireland but actually in New York City on Mar. 17, 1762.
- Green is associated with St. Patrick's day because it is the color of spring, Ireland and the shamrock.
- St. Patrick was given credit for chasing the snakes out of Ireland. The snake is a pagan symbol.
- St. Patrick used the shamrock leaf to symbolize the Trinity, and today many people wear a shamrock to commemorate St. Patrick's Day.

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